

## **Livin' the good life: Resorts and Camps in Indiana**

### **Bartlett Real Estate Office (Porter County)**

The Bartlett Real Estate Office was constructed in 1927 as the office for a resort development that Frederick Bartlett planned in Beverly Shores, a small community along the southern tip of Lake Michigan amidst the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. Designed by Fred Mertz in the Mediterranean Revival style, the office and proposed residential development were intended to mimic the exotic architecture and atmosphere of Florida, specifically Boca Raton, a resort area that was popular at the time. Bartlett was trying to appeal to the wealthy residents of Chicago who wanted to vacation near the sun and waters of Florida but did not want to travel that distance. Potential clients would travel from Chicago on the South Shore. They would arrive at the depot (also Mediterranean in style) and proceed to the office. There was a plan book illustrating a variety of Mediterranean Revival houses that could be built at Beverly Shores. The arrival of the Depression slowed construction in Beverly Shores but 25 new houses had been constructed by 1935. By the mid-1940s six Century of Progress World's Fair houses had been moved to Beverly Shores and 66 additional houses had been built.



The building now serves as the Beverly Shores Administration Building, housing the clerk-treasurer's office, a public and town council meeting room, and the town marshal's office, as it has since 1946. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2004.

### **Beverly Shores Administrative Building**

500 South Broadway  
Beverly Shores, IN 46301  
219/ 872-0046

### **Monon Park Dancing Pavilion, Cedar Lake (Lake County)**

Monon Park was created in 1897 by the Monon Railroad as a way to encourage passengers to travel on the line. It ran from Chicago through Indianapolis to Louisville. Located on picturesque Cedar Lake, Monon Park was close enough to Chicago that people could easily spend a weekend and enjoy plenty of free time to fish, boat, swim, or play baseball. Other amenities included a racetrack, midway, photo booth, dancing and live music. Many of the buildings, including the dancing pavilion, were designed by railroad architects and, therefore, had many similarities to depots of the time. Families, churches, fraternal groups, and companies came to Monon Park. In 1907 the Marshall Field Company held its company picnic on the grounds.



By the 1910s, the glory days of Monon Park were beginning to fade. Pickpockets and fighting resulted in declining profits. In 1914 Monon Park was sold to Moody Memorial Bible Church. They made the park more of a Chautauqua with lectures, music, inspirational talks, and Christian evangelical sermons. This change in focus along with improvements to the grounds increased the number of visitors to 400-500 per day. The dancing pavilion was converted into a library/lounge on one end and a dormitory on the other.

Today the park is owned by the Cedar Lake Conference. They continue to use it for conferences and bible camp.

To learn more about the history of Cedar Lake and the Monon Park:  
<http://www.chrispy.net/~monon/bygone/mononpark.html>

13701 Lauerman Street  
Cedar Lake, IN 46303  
219/ 374-5941  
email: [clbcc@cedarlakeministries.org](mailto:clbcc@cedarlakeministries.org)

### **Fountain Park Chautauqua (Jasper County)**

The Fountain Park Chautauqua was created in 1895 by Remington Bank president Robert Parker. He envisioned an annual assembly to be held for people to discuss topics including religion, science, literature and the arts that was based on the Chautauqua movement that began in New York State in 1874. Chautauqua was a way for smaller communities to gain access to cultural and educational enrichment. It is estimated that, at its peak in popularity (1924-1925), there were 30 million people involved summer Chautauquas at 12,000 communities around the country. Camp was in session during the summer and participants would take classes and enjoy a variety of speakers and entertainers.



Arranged in a large loop, the Fountain Park grounds originally contained a large area for tents (permanent cabins would come later), a tabernacle, a hotel and dining room, a shelter house, and other buildings on over 30 acres. At the center of the loop was a large shaded opening that served as a large gathering space and play area. Today the grounds consist of 17 acres and there are permanent cabins in place of the tents but the remainder of the grounds at Fountain Park function as they did historically. Camp continues to meet every summer and visitors can either stay at the hotel or camp on the grounds. Fountain Park was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2001.

Fountain Park is located approximately 1 mile north of Remington on 231 at 6244 W. R 1600S.  
[www.fountain-park.org](http://www.fountain-park.org)

### **Lake Maxinkuckee (Marshall County)**

Lake Maxinkuckee, Indiana's second largest lake, became a resort community beginning in the 1870s and the area continues to be a summer vacation spot today. After the Civil War industrialization led to more populated cities and as cities became more crowded, they became

dirtier and noisier causing the wealthier citizens to look for an escape. The expanding railroads offered an opportunity for travel and wealthy urban residents fled to the country for clean air and open space. Lake Maxinkuckee provided such a destination. Fishermen began visiting the area in the 1860s-1870s. Groups from different cities formed “clubhouses”—groups from Plymouth, Peru and Indianapolis created these private hotels. Eventually these fishermen started bringing their families to Lake Maxinkuckee for fishing, swimming, boating, sailing, golfing, and tennis. With this influx of visitors, the clubhouses gave way to small hotels, boarding houses, and private residences. The oldest houses around the lake are on the east shore, the west shore was developed after World War I and the south shore since World War II.

Activities at Lake Maxinkuckee included a Chautauqua Assembly that lasted from 1899 until 1905 although none of the associated buildings remain. There was a yachting club established in 1896 and it continues as the Maxinkuckee Yacht Club today. The Coffin Golf Course started in 1906 as a 3-hole course. It was expanded in 1922 as the East Shore Country Club and in 1925 was renamed the Maxinkuckee Country Club.

Many well-known Hoosiers spent time at Lake Maxinkuckee. General Lew Wallace of Crawfordsville wrote portions of *Ben Hur* at the Allegheny House. Meredith Nicholson used Culver and Lake Maxinkuckee as the setting for his *The House of a Thousand Candles* and wrote much of the book in the area. Booth Tarkington spent time at Lake Maxinkuckee writing *The Gentleman from Indiana* and James Whitcomb Riley wrote a poem about the lake. Author Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. spent summers of his childhood at the family cottages on the east shore. His grandfather, well-known Indianapolis architect Bernard Vonnegut, and his brothers all built houses there.

Lake Maxinkuckee is located west of US 31 and north of SR 110 in Marshall County. Several individual sites and historic districts surrounding the lake have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

To learn more about Lake Maxinkuckee, contact:

Marshall County Historical Society  
123 N. Michigan St.  
Plymouth, IN 46563  
574/ 936-2306  
[www.mchistoricalsociety.org/](http://www.mchistoricalsociety.org/)

### **Winona Lake (Kosciusko County)**

The Beyer brothers purchased a large parcel of land in 1886 on the shores of then Eagle Lake (later renamed Winona Lake) and opened Spring Fountain Park, a summer resort and amusement park. By 1895 the Winona Assembly and Summer School Association had purchased the property from the Beyers and started running a summer resort community based upon the Chautauqua that had been established in New York State.

The grounds of Winona Lake still convey the atmosphere of a summer resort. There is a ridge to the north of the lake where many of the two-story, wood frame residences were constructed. The houses are placed close together and many have two story porches overlooking the park and lake beyond. The cottages originally had names, some of which continue today. These houses were originally built for as summer residences but over the years have been converted into year round houses. Two that really stand out are the Beyer house and the Billy Sunday House. Two of the

Beyer brothers constructed this symmetrical Queen Anne house in 1907. A variety of concrete blocks was used to build the house complete with turrets and wrap around porches. The three story interior was divided into identical halves—one for each brother. The Billy Sunday House, also known as Mount Hood, was built by the noted evangelist and his wife in 1911. This Arts and Crafts bungalow has a remarkably intact interior with decoratively painted canvas wall coverings and wainscoting. It is currently serves as a house museum. Below the ring of residential properties is a 200-acre park that includes an amphitheater, formal gardens, paths, retaining walls, fountains, benches, and sculpture.

There are a series of non-residential buildings that dot the landscape as well. These include hotels, guest hotels, religious buildings, gathering spaces, and retail space, a more recent addition. The Winona Hotel, the oldest building in the area, dates from 1887 and predates “Winona Lake”. Built in the Second Empire style, this 3 ½ story building dominates the northeast side of the area. It is currently being converted into apartments/condominiums.

Winona Lake reached its peak in the 1910s-1920s, due in part to Billy Sunday’s gift of preaching. Attendance in this small town, two miles east of downtown Warsaw, climbed to 10,000. However, it was not to last. Sunday died in 1935 and by 1943 Winona Lake had seen the final summer assembly and the demise of programs. During the 1940s-1960s the facilities were used for other religious-based functions but the area continued to decline. The area was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1993. The Winona Restoration Company was formed in 1994 and helped revitalized Winona Lake. Since then public and private buildings have been restored, a retail area has been created, and visitors are returning to Winona Lake.

The Village at Winona  
901 East Canal  
Winona Lake, IN 46590  
ph: (574) 268-9888  
fx: (574) 269-1058  
<http://www.villageatwinona.com>  
email: [info@villageatwinona.com](mailto:info@villageatwinona.com)

### **Fox Lake Resort, Angola (Steuben County)**

This African American resort community in northeastern Indiana was developed in 1924 when a group of Indiana businessmen decided to market the area exclusively to black families. Segregation abounded and African American families were not permitted in other lake resorts. It was the only such resort in Indiana at the time. Most of the buildings were single family cottages but there was also a small hotel, a restaurant, a clubhouse/dance hall, a beach with bathhouse and pier, tennis courts, horseshoe pits, and basketball hoops. Famous entertainers and athletes like Duke Ellington and Joe Lewis stayed there.

Fox Lake is located east of I-69, about one mile southwest of Angola. It lies south of US 20 between West Fox Lake Road and County Road 150 West. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2001.

### **Chesterfield Spiritualist Camp (Madison County)**

The Chesterfield Spiritualist Camp was established in 1890 outside of Anderson, Indiana. Modern Spiritualism emerged in the mid-1800s and involves the science, philosophy, and religion of continuous life, based on the communication through a medium with those in the spirit world. The camp setting was used to meet, exchange ideas, and witness the demonstrations of famous mediums and believers streamed to these sites all over the country.



Spiritualists camps in the 1870s originally consisted of tents and were know for the festive and entertaining environment. Eventually more permanent structures were built including both public buildings (auditoriums, hotels, cafeterias) and private (cottages). As time went on, more and more cottages were added and what had started out as a 2-6 week summer session evolved into a year round settlement.

By 1924 Spiritualist camps could be found in almost every state and Spiritualism was particularly strong in Indiana. There were two state associations, one established in 1888 and the other in 1904 and there were churches in Veedersburg, Angola, Muncie, Yorktown, Crawfordsville, Greensburg, Fort Wayne, North Vernon, and Indianapolis. In fact, there were over fifty churches in Indiana by 1924 with an estimated attendance of over half a million people. The six week camp session at Chesterfield drew over 20,000 in 1927.

Today the Chesterfield Spiritualist Camp contains a variety of buildings dating from the 1900s-1950s. The cottages are a variety of modest structures that are arranged around a large centralized wooded green space. It is one of the few Spiritualist camps that remain today; there is one in Florida and another in Maine. Chesterfield was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2002.

Indiana Association of Spiritualists  
Chesterfield Spiritualist Camp  
50 Lincoln Dr.  
Chesterfield, IN 46017  
765/ 378-0235

### **Rockville Chautauqua Pavilion (Parke County)**

Although built to house chautauqua events, the Rockville Chautauqua Pavilion is of a more simple form than some of the more camp and resort-like settings previously mentioned. It was built at Beechwood Park in 1913 when the Rockville Chautauqua was two years old. It is octagonal in form of timber beams and rises 1 ½ stories with a clerestory. The two-level roof structure was original wood shingle but was replaced in 1976-1978 with a standing seam metal roof. The pavilion has open sides and a stage area at one end. It was built to hold 2800 people.

The first meeting was held in August 1911 and evangelist Billy Sunday was the speaker. This first event drew 3,500 people. The Rockville Chautauqua reached its peak attendance in 1915 when between 8,000-10,000 came to hear former president William Howard Taft. By 1930 the Chautauqua Association decided to dissolve the group and permanently give the camp to the local parks department. They continue to maintain the park today.



Other features within Beechwood Park that date back to the Chautauqua days include the entry gates and ticket booths, a picnic shelter, and water fountain. The pavilion was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1999.

For more information contact:

Town of Rockville  
P.O. Box 143  
Rockville, IN 47872  
765/ 569-6253

### **French Lick Springs Hotel (Orange County)**

Located in the Springs Valley area of Orange County, the French Lick Springs Hotel helped make the region a destination for those in search of either mineral waters or casinos or, more likely, a combination of the two. The Springs Valley was rich with salt deposits and mineral springs as early as 1778. By the 1830s the health benefits of “taking the waters” was commonly known. Other resorts emerged in the Valley due to the popularity of the waters but by the turn of the century, gambling had become a second powerful draw.



The first hotel was constructed on the property by Doctor William Bowles c.1845. From 1846-1855 Bowles leased the hotel to John Lane who was a patent medicine seller from New York. Lane started an advertising campaign to lure people to the Valley for its health benefits. Bowles continued the advertising when he resumed control of the hotel from 1855 until his death in 1884 when his heirs sold the hotel and springs to Hiram Wells and James Andrews. In 1887 they sold the property to the French Lick Springs Company. From the mid-1880s until the turn of the century a variety of renovations took place on the grounds of the French Lick Springs Hotel including the addition of bowling alleys, croquet pitch, and a ballroom. The grounds were wired for electricity in 1888 and the hotel staff was expanded to include a doctor, photographer, barber and a band. There were more improvements the following year, the first time the hotel was open all year.

Despite the arrival of the railroad in 1888 and the series of improvements to the facilities, the optimism of life in the Valley was not to last. In 1897 the springs stopped flowing and the main hotel building burned. Consequently, the board of the French Lick Springs Hotel was looking to sell. Thomas Taggart, then mayor of Indianapolis, had experience as a hotel proprietor and found three partners to purchase the hotel. They hired W. Homer Floyd, a Terre Haute architect, to design the new facility in 1901. Placed within the rustic landscape of the Springs Valley, the 471-room French Lick Springs Hotel stood out with later additions rising anywhere from 2 to 7 stories. The veranda was added in 1902 and major remodeling campaigns occurred in 1910-1911 and up until 1925. Fortunately there are unifying features of the building that remained the same through all of the phases of construction: the smooth yellow brick, the similar proportions, and the consistent roof line. The ornate detailing, inside and out, conveyed the luxuriousness of the hotel.

The grounds surrounding the hotel were impressive. There are two golf courses and lavishly landscaped gardens. The older of the two courses is known as the Valley Golf Course. It began in 1897 as a 3-hole course. Taggart had the course expanded c.1907 to 18 holes by Scottish-American architect Thomas Bendelow. The other course, the Hill Golf Course, was designed by noted golf course architect Donald Ross in 1920. Located about two miles from the hotel, this 18-hole course has undergone only minor changes since its construction. There are three distinct gardens surrounding the hotel including a Japanese garden, a fresh water spring garden, and a formal garden. Sometime during Thomas Taggart's ownership but prior to 1908, a two-story casino was built on the grounds. After 1908 gambling was moved to the Brown's Hotel that was located across the street from French Lick. There were other buildings on the grounds including spring houses, a power plant, a water bottling plant, and a laundry.

Thomas Taggart bought out his three partners in 1905 and it remained in the Taggart family until his son, Thomas Douglas, sold it in 1946 to a company out of New York. However, during the Taggart reign the hotel flourished. It was the place to be seen during the '20s and 30s. He had strong political ties and intentionally invited politicians and reporters to stay at the hotel. The hotel also sold the mineral water up until 1927. In 1919, French Lick Springs sold over \$1.2 million worth of mineral water. Sales dropped with the advent of the Depression and never recovered after World War II. By 1929 the French Lick Springs Hotel encompassed 4000 acres and was worth almost \$2 million. The resort was able to weather the Depression due to Thomas Douglas Taggart's effort to increase advertising and specifically target conventions and golf.

The French Lick Springs Hotel continues to function as a resort hotel and was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2003.

French Lick Springs Hotel  
8670 W. SR 56  
French Lick, IN 47432  
800/ 457-4042  
[www.frenchlick.com/](http://www.frenchlick.com/)

### **West Baden Springs Hotel (Orange County)**

The current West Baden Springs Hotel was constructed in 1901-1902 but the site was used for hotels prior to this incarnation. The earliest hotel in West Baden Springs was constructed on this site in 1845. With the arrival of the Louisville, New Albany and Chicago line, a new hotel, the Mile Lick Hotel, was constructed in 1855 and renamed the West Baden Springs Hotel at a later date. Unfortunately for its owner, Lee Sinclair, a banker from Salem, Indiana, it burned in 1901. Sinclair decided to rebuild and hired architect Harrison Albright of Charlestown, West Virginia to design the hotel and engineer Oliver J. Westcott to plan the dome. Construction lasted from 1901 to 1902 on the six-story brick and concrete hotel. The 708-room hotel had a 16-sided exterior and a glass and steel dome covering a 195-foot open atrium. The rooms were arranged around the outer edge of the atrium and form two concentric circles separated by an open hallway. Rooms over looked either the atrium or the picturesque landscape. The free-standing dome was considered an engineering tour de force and visitors came to experience the architecture, partake of the restorative mineral waters on the grounds, and to take advantage of the variety of amenities that were offered at the West Baden Springs Hotel. These included a music room, theater, and stock exchange within the hotel. On the ground there were



spring houses, an opera house, bowling alleys and billiard tables, a natatorium, a small Catholic cathedral, a golf course, a stable, bridle paths and nature walks, formal gardens, and a two-story covered structure that housed a horse track and full-sized baseball field on the main level and a bicycle track on the upper level.

Sinclair died in 1916 and his daughter and son-in-law took over. They undertook a renovation campaign and added a large veranda to the exterior and a series of decorative additions on the interior including covering and painting the brick columns in the atrium, facing the lower walls with marble and the installation of the mosaic floor and the ceramic fireplace. From 1918-1919 the hotel served as an Army hospital but in 1922 Edward Ballard purchased the complex. He was in the gambling and circus business and, under his ownership, the West Baden Springs Hotel flourished. The proximity to gambling in the area drew a variety of famous people, including hotel regular, Al Capone. Ballard maintained ownership through 1932 when the hotel closed after suffering dramatically with the onset of the Great Depression. In 1934 Ballard donated the complex to a Jesuit seminary but they found the building offensive. They toned down the decorative embellishments of the exuberant hotel. The seminary maintained the building until 1964 and sold it to Northwood Institute, a private collegiate school of business management. By 1983, the hotel was sold to Eugene MacDonald and he intended to return the building to its original hotel use. Unfortunately by the early 1990s, the hotel was in receivership. Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana was able to purchase the building with the aid of an anonymous donor in the 1990s and the Cook Group Foundation was able to stabilize and partially restore the National Historic Landmark. The public portions of the hotel were restored including the entire exterior and the atrium. At this time it is estimated that the West Baden Springs Hotel will be restored and functioning as a casino in 2006.

For more information:

West Baden Springs Hotel  
812-936-4034

[www.historiclandmarks.org/things/westbaden.html](http://www.historiclandmarks.org/things/westbaden.html)

### **Homestead Hotel (Orange County)**

In contrast to the opulence of both the French Lick Springs Hotel and the West Baden Springs Hotel is the more modest, mid-sized Homestead Hotel. This building, located across the street from the West Baden Springs Hotel, was built in 1913. Smaller hotels began appearing in the Springs Valley in the late 1890s. The rates at both French Lick and West Baden ranged from \$2-\$3 a day so only the wealthy could afford to stay there. The mineral waters and casinos were a powerful enough draw that people of all classes wanted to visit the valley. This resulted in the construction of a series of mid-sized hotels that only charged \$1 a day including meals. The Homestead is the only mid-sized hotel that remains today.

The Homestead Hotel is a brick, three story tall structure. The first floor was used for commercial space while the upper floors offered guest rooms. The retail space included a saloon, drugstore, drygoods store, restaurant, town post office, and a ladies' clothing store. There were no casinos or mineral baths at the Homestead. However these amenities were available at other hotels in the valley. By 1913 three of the 21 hotels had established public casinos. Hotel guests at the Homestead were able to purchase a "water privilege ticket" for either French Lick or West Baden to "take the waters".



In 1919 Ed Ballard, future owner of the West Baden Springs Hotel, purchased the Homestead Hotel for \$1. Ballard weathered the beginning of the Depression but sold the Homestead to his cousins in 1934. Upon the transfer of the West Baden Springs Hotel to the Jesuits that same year, the Homestead was renamed the West Baden Springs Hotel. With new ownership and a new name came a new look for the hotel. The main entrance was redesigned and included a revolving door and Art Deco canopy. The building continued to function as a hotel until 1976 when the Northwood Institute purchased the hotel for a dormitory. In 1984 Eugene McDonald purchased both the Homestead and the West Baden Springs Hotels to return them to hotel use. Unfortunately, neither effort was successful and the Homestead was turned over to the county. The hotel was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1998. In 2001 the Homestead Hotel underwent a successful restoration effort and was converted into senior housing.

Homestead Apartments  
8163 W State Road 56  
West Baden Springs, IN 47469  
812) 936-7999